AMSTERDAM MAP
Results of the Netherlands Presidency conference on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

What principles can guide the future Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)?

Content

We should structure the MFF according to our objectives
- We should design a coherent MFF structure that aligns EU spending with European strategic priorities.
- We should use the MFF to support country-specific recommendations.
- We should use the principle of subsidiarity to avoid spending that could also be done nationally.
- We should use the MFF to strengthen solidarity between Member States, regions and citizens.
- We should use the MFF to enhance a digital single market that creates strong regions and jobs locally.
- We should make the MFF coherent with foreign policy objectives and securing the European neighbourhood.

We should connect the MFF to European citizens
- We should make the MFF democratically accountable and transparant towards citizens.
- We should use the MFF to connect the EU to citizens and win their support for the EU.

We should focus the content of the MFF on European Added Value and performance
- We should focus the MFF on policies with clear European Added Value.
- We should define the content on the basis of performance, requiring evidence that policies deliver results.
- We should remove spending that does not realize the intended results through a feedback system.

We should make the MFF future-oriented
- We need an MFF with foresight, based on clear priorities and capable of adapting to changing circumstances.
- We should include a mechanism in the MFF that balances short term and long term priorities.

Flexibility

We should build flexibility into the MFF to respond to new priorities
- We should use flexible spending for policies with clear European Added Value.
- We should use money flexibly between headings, not only within headings.
- We should reduce subsidies and use financial instruments instead, such as loans and guarantees.
- We should combine flexibility on the income side and flexibility on the spending side.
- We should have a rich diversity of financial instruments, to be able to serve different goals.
- We should respect the unity of the budget and not spend outside the MFF.

We should create reserve capacity within the MFF
- We should make unused money flow back into an EU reserve budget.
- We should not allocate all the budget into specific categories at the start of the MFF process to increase flexibility.
- We need a minimum amount of reserves which will not be pre-allocated, with strict criteria for use.
- We need bigger margins under annual ceilings, allowing flexibility throughout the year.

We need clear procedures that allow for flexibility
- We should have clear and easy triggers, agreed in advance, to release funds to respond to urgent priorities.
- We should build trust between European institutions regarding the flexibility in spending.

Financing

We need a simple system of Own Resources
- We should simplify national contributions to the EU level.
- We need a fair, simple and transparent Own Resources system to enhance public trust.
- We should not add new taxes to the Own Resources.
- We should take account of the cost effectiveness of new resources.
- We should work on the basis of purchasing power when calculating contributions.

We need to provide the EU with better sources of revenue
- We need sufficient value adding resources and sufficiently flexible resources.
- We should increase revenue by improving tax collection in Member States, creating the right incentives.
- We should use EU policies and direct contributions from citizens to finance the MFF.
- We should tax harmful consumer behavior instead of good behavior.

We need to look at the revenue and expenditure side simultaneously
- We need a package approach for changes on the revenue and expenditure sides (dual track approach).
- We should keep the equilibrium of the EU budget, avoiding EU debt for future generations.

Negotiating

We need to structure the negotiation process step by step
- We should make clear before negotiations what we are going to discuss when: duration, goals, budget.
- We should be transparant on the starting position of Member States before entering negotiations.
- We should start by negotiating the burden and benefit sharing formula first, solving 'juste-retour' negotiations directly.
- We should agree on common goals first (expressed in European Added Value) before negotiating amounts and budgets.
- We should divide the MFF in different parts and negotiate these parts on the basis of different principles.

We should connect the MFF negotiation process to European citizens
- We should stimulate European citizens and representatives to participate in the negotiation process.
- We should actively involve and engage national parliaments in the negotiation process.

We need clear and simple procedures for the negotiation process
- We should appoint a permanent chair for the negotiation process.
- We should align the timing and duration of negotiations with the election cycle of the European Parliament and Commission.
- We should limit the negotiation time, for instance cutting it in half by starting a few months before the deadline.
- We should decide on the MFF without vetoes.

This map provides an overview of the results of four workshops held during the Netherlands Presidency conference on the MFF in Amsterdam on the 28th of January 2016. Over 150 participants from across the European Union, divided over these four workshops, participated in an open conversation on the principles that could guide the future MFF.

The goal of these workshops was to have a free and open exchange of ideas, without necessarily reaching consensus. The principles do not reflect agreement on behalf of the participants, or the view of the Netherlands Presidency. The principles presented here may also be opposed to each other.

This map gives an overview of the combined results from the four workshops in four categories. The complete list of principles from each workshop, as they were shared during the workshops, can be found in the Annex to the conference report.

The Presidency conference was organized in order to start the discussion on the next MFF at an early stage. The principles in this map should be considered a first step, serving as a point of departure for future discussion on improving the next MFF.

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